

determinar las jerarquías internas que se construyen en el encuentro sexual. A partir de una cultura que privilegia una masculinidad que prima la penetración y condena la pasividad del hombre sodomizado, Berco determina una estrecha correlación entre la edad del participante en el acto sexual y el rol que éste desempeña. El historiador se refiere, asimismo, a una “geografía sexual” (40) que tiene en la calle su espacio privilegiado de oportunidad y que determina la existencia, ampliamente extendida, de una cultura homoerótica masculina. Es especialmente interesante el capítulo tres, dedicado a explorar las dinámicas internas del proceso sexual homoerótico susceptibles de invertir el orden social y las jerarquías públicas.

En el segundo bloque del volumen, Berco examina los efectos que el presunto acto sodomítico producía tanto en la sociedad local como en los círculos inquisitoriales. El capítulo cuatro está dedicado al desarrollo de las leyes contra la sodomía en España y Europa desde la época medieval, tanto en el terreno eclesiástico como en el seglar (lo que explica cómo el pecado llegó a secularizarse e incluirse en los códigos de leyes reales). El capítulo quinto pone de manifiesto la importancia de la participación popular en los casos por sodomía (los familiares del Santo Oficio raramente iniciaban un proceso por sodomía; lo hacían cuando recibían una denuncia). En una sociedad patriarcal en la que la sodomización “signalled the ultimate humiliation a man could suffer, conjuring images of femininity and submission” (99), la disposición a denunciar ante la Inquisición—incluso por parte de niños y adolescentes—da muestra inequívoca de un sistema de justicia bien establecido y respetado en este sentido. Por último, el capítulo seis analiza los patrones de conducta que se derivan del tratamiento de los diferentes grupos sociales—extranjeros, locales, clérigos, moriscos y esclavos negros—al enfrentarse a la acusación del crimen por sodomía (los tribunales inquisitoriales de Aragón juzgaron más de 500 casos entre los últimos años del s. XVI y 1700), así como los consiguientes castigos que, según el estudio de Berco, reflejaban el estatus social del condenado.

El estudio de Berco supone en definitiva una contribución importante y necesaria a los estudios culturales de la sociedad áurea española dado que su minuciosa investigación de archivos y casos inquisitoriales nos ayudará a comprender mejor cómo “male homosexual behaviour emerges as a crucial nexus in our understanding of social relations within the fluid society of the time” (140), a la vez que sirve de instrumento aplicable al período más fructífero y emblemático de las artes y letras españolas.

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Birkenmaier, Anke. *Alejo Carpentier y la cultura del surrealismo en América Latina*. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2006. 289 pp.

Contrary to what most students and scholars of Latin American literature assume, this book argues that surrealism had a persistent, deep impact in the work of Alejo Carpentier, and that this impact was emblematic of the vanguard's

power and pervasiveness in twentieth-century Latin American literary and cultural production. In her ambitious transatlantic study, Professor Birkenmaier is especially interested in how Carpentier's development of the notion of "lo real maravilloso" signifies not a break with surrealism, but instead a key moment in its appropriation and modification within a Latin American setting. While its persistence is invariably associated with France, the author demonstrates the many ways in which surrealism stopped belonging to the French a long time ago (18). She alerts us to the fact that surrealism's imprint in Latin America may be less visible in the written works of Carpentier and other *boom* authors than in the images and sounds produced in the then-new media of radio, television and print culture in the 1920s to 1940s (14). Birkenmaier suggests that these manifestations contributed to a new notion of orality, mechanized or mediated by the apparatus of recording or projection equipment (15). She maintains, then, that Afro-Cubanism and other discourses of Latin American surrealism framed in racial terms should be considered in relation to the "democratic" nature of radio and newspapers and their ability to reach vast audiences across and beyond earlier dividing lines of color and class. Other surrealist tendencies, such as the incorporation of "automatic writing" and a narratorial stance akin to that of the ethnographer, are still in evidence in *testimonio* and other contemporary Spanish American literary forms (255).

Birkenmaier argues that in Latin America the thematic emphasis on metamorphosis characteristic of the surreal is frequently tied to historic events: a text such as *El reino de este mundo* grafts history and myth, or as Carpentier might have it, history and "faith," charting a shared terrain of social realism and surrealism (110, 125). From this perspective, Mackandal and Bouckman, folk heroes of the Haitian Revolution who incorporated popular religious rituals and beliefs into political uprisings, are much more compelling figures for him than Toussaint-Louverture, for whom *vodún* and its practice as a "collective unconscious" had little importance (104–105). While this integration of the religious and the political is indeed central to this novel and other works of Carpentier, it seems debatable that for him "la religión en Latinoamérica es lo que el arte en Europa" (111), given his self-confessed limited knowledge and selective incorporation of Afro-Cuban ritual, as well as his challenge to traditional religious practices and dogma in many works, including *Reino*. Birkenmaier's assertion that Carpentier "busca en la historia momentos de revelación o de estado límite que pongan lo real en evidencia" (134) is a more precise formulation of this idea because it leaves room for a broad definition of cultural practices that include but are not limited to issues of spirituality, and provides as well for the acknowledgement of the "profane illumination" that would characterize Latin American fiction well into the second half of the twentieth century (255).

Alejo Carpentier y la cultura del surrealismo en América Latina benefits from a detailed comparative analysis that depends less on intertextuality, narrowly defined, than on discursive and experiential overlaps and crosscurrents. Addressing the parallels between Carpentier and the Cuban plastic artist Wifredo Lam, for example, Birkenmaier argues that for both the writer and the painter, surrealism was by no means an imported style but in fact the vehicle of a new Cuban art (119).

Elsewhere she clarifies that the focus on intellectual renovation and social action that Carpentier and Lam brought back with them from France ultimately owed more to the *dissidents* of surrealism than to the principles outlined by Breton himself (153).

The book's exploration of surrealist tendencies in the golden age of radio (1932–1939), provides fresh and innovative scholarship for students of Carpentier, and includes a lengthy discussion of the perceived merits and dangers of radio for thinkers such as Walter Benjamin and Paul Deharme. Deharme worked closely with Carpentier and Robert Desnos in producing a series of radio programs in the latter part of the 1920s, when the Cuban writer was living in Paris. Though Carpentier would later return to narrative as his fundamental medium of expression, characterizing radio and television as “funestas” and facile mediums at odds with the rigors of careful writing, Birkenmaier argues that those early experiments with radio left an indelible mark on his style, especially in terms of the integration of surrealist characteristics (203–16).

There are some inherent challenges to traditional scholarship on Carpentier in these assertions. Birkenmaier's argument depends on reading the famous prologue to *El reino de este mundo* as “nominal,” the “residue” of the political nationalism characteristic of the period, and ultimately misrepresentative of his long-term commitment to and integration of surrealism (20). Thus, *lo real maravilloso* should not be regarded as a unique Latin American alternative to surrealism, as Carpentier himself posits in that prologue, but as an attempt to translate the goals and hopes of the European vanguard to the Latin American setting (37). A good example of this strategy can be found, Birkenmaier recommends, in *Poèmes des Antilles*, in which Carpentier combines surrealist techniques or technology with his own musical theories (42–43). Another is *¡Écue-Yamba-Ó!*, which she describes as a “surrealist museum,” the first and only Afro-Cuban novel ever written (53–54). The most convincing proof of that book's surrealist-ethnographic character is the series of eleven illustrations included only in the first edition in 1933. Birkenmaier acknowledges that in the prologue to the second edition of the novel in 1976, Carpentier admits to his failures in integrating nationalist and vanguardist tendencies, characterizing his early novel as a “juvenile Hamletic monologue.” Implicitly, then, the author asks us to take more seriously an aesthetic effort Carpentier himself disavowed as “forced” and immature, and less seriously a text (*El reino de este mundo* and its prologue) considered one of the very foundations of a uniquely Latin American writerly aesthetic, and a fundamental precursor to the *boom*.

The title of the book does not do justice to Birkenmaier's worthy project, which ranges well beyond Carpentier, and arguably beyond surrealism and its diverse manifestations in Latin America as well. One of the book's notable strengths, its detailed analysis of theoretical interventions understudied or avoided in traditional literary criticism, such as the ideas of Benjamin and Adorno on the aesthetic potential or perniciousness of radio, is not conveyed in the title; such nuggets suggest a rich lode of research activity by Birkenmaier and others that reconsiders Latin American cultural phenomena in relation to European cultural debates. She cites frequently from French sources—sometimes with a translation to Spanish but more

often not—and she identifies Carpentier’s early writings in French with a desire to situate (Afro)Cuban culture in a global context (84). She makes a strong case for the influence of the Collège de Sociologie and its radical philosophical reaction to the totalitarian fascism of the 1930s in the development of Carpentier’s aesthetic signature. Birkenmaier also illuminates the affinities between the ideas of Carpentier, Georges Bataille and Roger Caillois, intellectual kinships she is exploring further in her current research. Her exploration of the surrealists’ contention that music’s abstract character represented liberation from rational constraints of thought is extremely pertinent to a study of Carpentier (199–200). In her conclusion, the author suggests ways in which the surrealist bent that pervades Carpentier’s writing can be uncovered in the works of other Latin American authors, most notably Julio Cortázar, Guillermo Cabrera Infante and Mario Vargas Llosa. Faced with new threats from mass media that had now become omnipresent, these authors defended books as both an aesthetic and commercial form, adopting an aggressive posture of including such media in their narratives (252). The *boom* is the proof of their successful efforts to (re)conquer and retain reading publics. Carpentier’s optimistic maintenance of such a position through the cultural shifts and priority changes of the Cuban Revolution is evident in texts such as his 1972 “Elogio y reivindicación del libro” and can be compared, Birkenmaier notes, to Benjamin’s confidence in the public’s judgment and capacity for self-regulation expressed four decades earlier (254). With these and other contextualizations, Birkenmaier sheds important light on the many ways in which different literary, musical and audiovisual genres coalesced to create *esa música que Carpentier llevaba dentro*.

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Caminero-Santangelo, Marta. *On Latinidad, US Latino Literature and the Construction of Ethnicity*. UP of Florida, 2007. 297 pp.

Marta Caminero-Santangelo’s *On Latinidad* rises from a plethora of recent books (most from a social sciences perspective) which survey, assess and explore the status of the Latino/Hispanic subject in the US. Her text undertakes a meticulous review of theories and approaches since the 1980s, connecting these to her assessments of landmark Latino novels. Caminero-Santangelo astutely creates three categories for her ideas: “Race and Ethnicity,” “Complicating the Origins,” and “Difference and the Possibilities of Panethnicity,” within which are two, and in the final section three, chapters. Making reference to various other creative works, each chapter focuses primarily on one novel. In the first section, the two chapters explore the pioneering texts of Rudolfo Anaya and Piri Thomas.

In this extensive study, (with substantial notes and bibliography), of both creative works and contemporary scholarship on the US Latino population, the author weaves a consideration of pan-ethnicity. Some two decades ago, such a concept was employed to define and reveal Maya ethnicity and similar cultural production across borders, but pan-Maya has now faded from use. While it is equally